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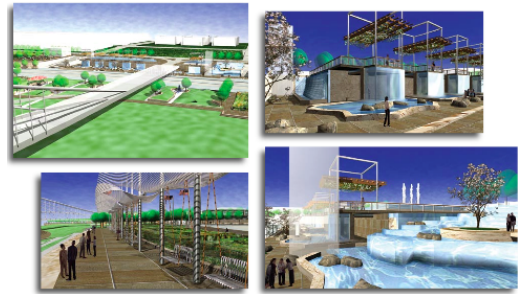
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Cincinnati Riverfront Park *Return to Our River Heritage!*



REFINED DESIGNS FOR CINCINNATI RIVERFRONT PARK ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED

*Urban Design Review Board & Park Steering Committee express strong
support for plans*

CINCINNATI, OH:--- At a Public Meeting on Wednesday, May 24, 2006, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Cincinnati Parks unveiled the refined plans for Cincinnati Riverfront Park. **Public comment was overwhelmingly positive.** The park is planned for the downtown Cincinnati riverfront area between Paul Brown Stadium and the Great American Ballpark. The new designs reflect the input gleaned from an extensive community participation process initiated by Cincinnati Parks in 1998.

Cincinnati's Urban Design Review Board convened on Thursday, May 25, 2006, to review the newly refined plans for the Park. The board supported the design of the park and agreed that the final design phase should move forward as planned. (The Urban Design Review Board—consisting of five architects and a business leader—acts as an advisor to the City Manager on major downtown and riverfront projects which have City involvement.)

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The Cincinnati Park Board's Central Riverfront Park Steering Committee also met on May 25 to review the designs. The committee—formed in 1998 and comprised of community and business leaders as well as park stakeholder representatives—unanimously approved the park design. The Steering Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Park Board and planning team regarding the design of the proposed new riverfront park.

"One important aspect of the plan is the green space north of Mehring Way that provides a unique setting for a world class restaurant and concessions," said Frank Russell, a member of the Steering Committee and a Park Board Commissioner. "These attractions serve not only to enliven the Banks District and the park around it, but they will provide much needed revenue for Central Riverfront Park maintenance and operations which will allow the park to be self-sufficient and long-lived."

"I think the long-term path of this public design process has borne beautiful fruit," said Jan Brown Checco, an advisor to the Park's design team on the integration of art in the park. "Members of the steering committee have been around the world and have witnessed for themselves the designs and greenspaces in other world cities. They were extremely enthusiastic that the designs for Cincinnati Riverfront Park were right in step with what they have seen in first class waterfront parks the world over."

"This park was born out of a dialogue with the people of this city," said Alistair McIntosh, Principal and Landscape Architect with Sasaki Associates of Watertown, Massachusetts—the park's designers. "We know from speaking with the citizens of this community that the essence of life here is rooted in the river and the need to connect once again with the water's edge. The design renderings clearly illustrate how the barriers that have prevented people from touching the water and interacting with the river will be removed at last."

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"The park is designed to provide a spectacular showcase for the Roebling Suspension Bridge—a national historic landmark and a towering icon of the colorful history that defines the city," noted Varoujan Hagopian, Sasaki Associates Principal and Civil/Waterfront Engineer. "The park possesses many different personalities, with activity options as diverse as people's interests."

While citizen response to the refined plans was exceedingly positive ("...you have identified a large number of wonderful ideas," said one attendee at the Public Meeting), some expressed concern. "We have plenty of parks around Cincinnati," offered one observer. "We need to build a riverfront that will bring money into the city."

"The public process that has been such a critical force in the planning of this park over the last seven years continues to drive the design of the park---even in its final stages," said Willie F. Carden, Jr., Director of Cincinnati Parks. "We have heard hundreds of ideas from citizens and stakeholders over the years and each insight has been carefully considered. The enthusiastic response from the Urban Design Review Board and the Central Riverfront Park Steering Committee confirms for us that the park design and its innovative features reflect the community consensus and will indeed provide the much hoped for economic benefits to the region."

Federal construction authorization and first phase funding is expected in 2006. Construction could begin as soon as the third quarter of 2007, with the first phase of the park completed by late 2009.

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“This park has the capacity to reinvigorate this city,” said Hagopian. “In Charleston, South Carolina, we designed and built a waterfront park that transformed an overgrown, abandoned part of the city into the community’s new gateway. City leaders acknowledge that the park has been a powerful engine for the region’s tremendous economic growth and new reputation as a ‘destination city’.”

Though the plans are now entering the final design phase, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to accept comments on the park for the next several weeks. To view the park designs, visit <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/parks>. Comments can be e-mailed to Steve Schuckman, Cincinnati Parks Superintendent of Planning and Design, at Steven.Schuckman@cincinnati-oh.gov.

For more information, please contact Joyce Kamen, Parks Public Relations, at 513.543.8109; or Julie Horne, Parks Chief Business Officer at 513.357.2606.

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The City of Cincinnati’s parks system contains more than 100 parks and greenspaces located throughout the City’s neighborhoods on more than 5,000 acres. Cincinnati Parks has been judged one of the best in the nation, rated ‘excellent’ by the Trust for Public Land.